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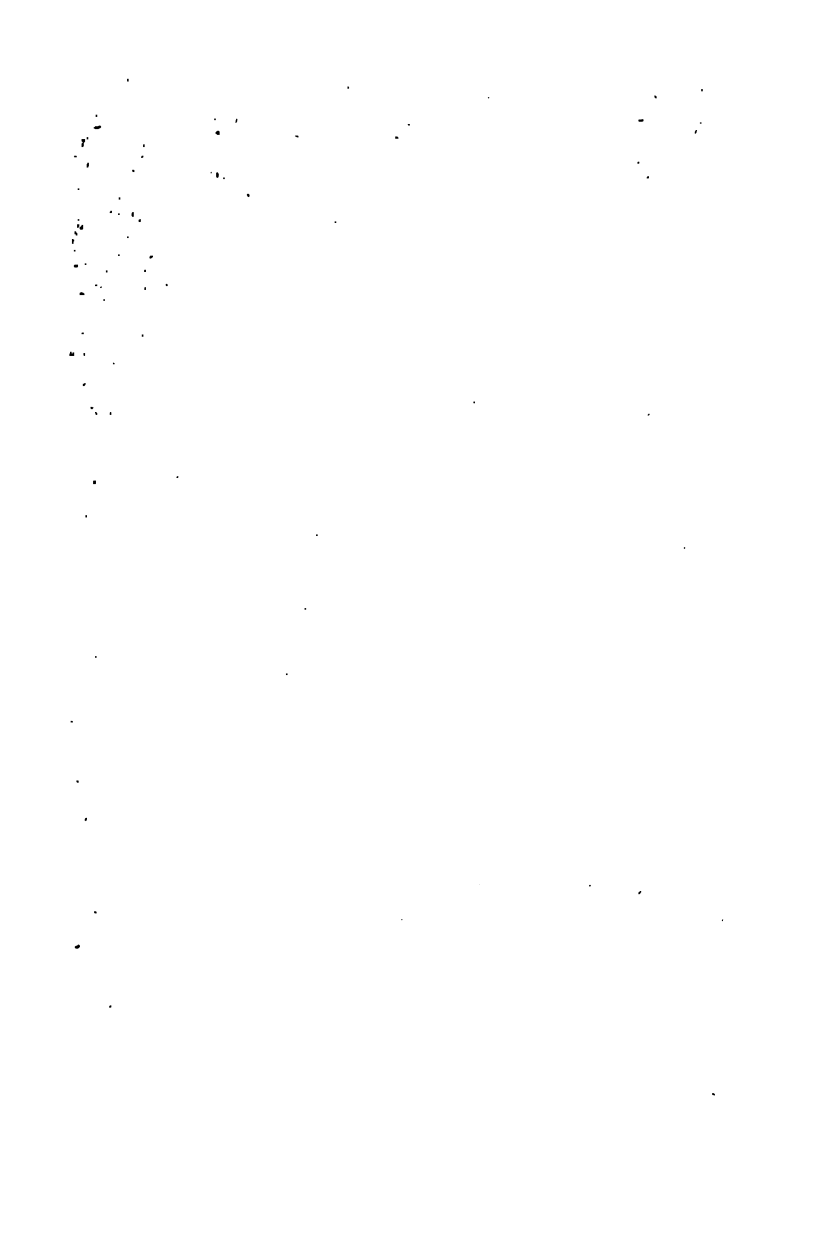


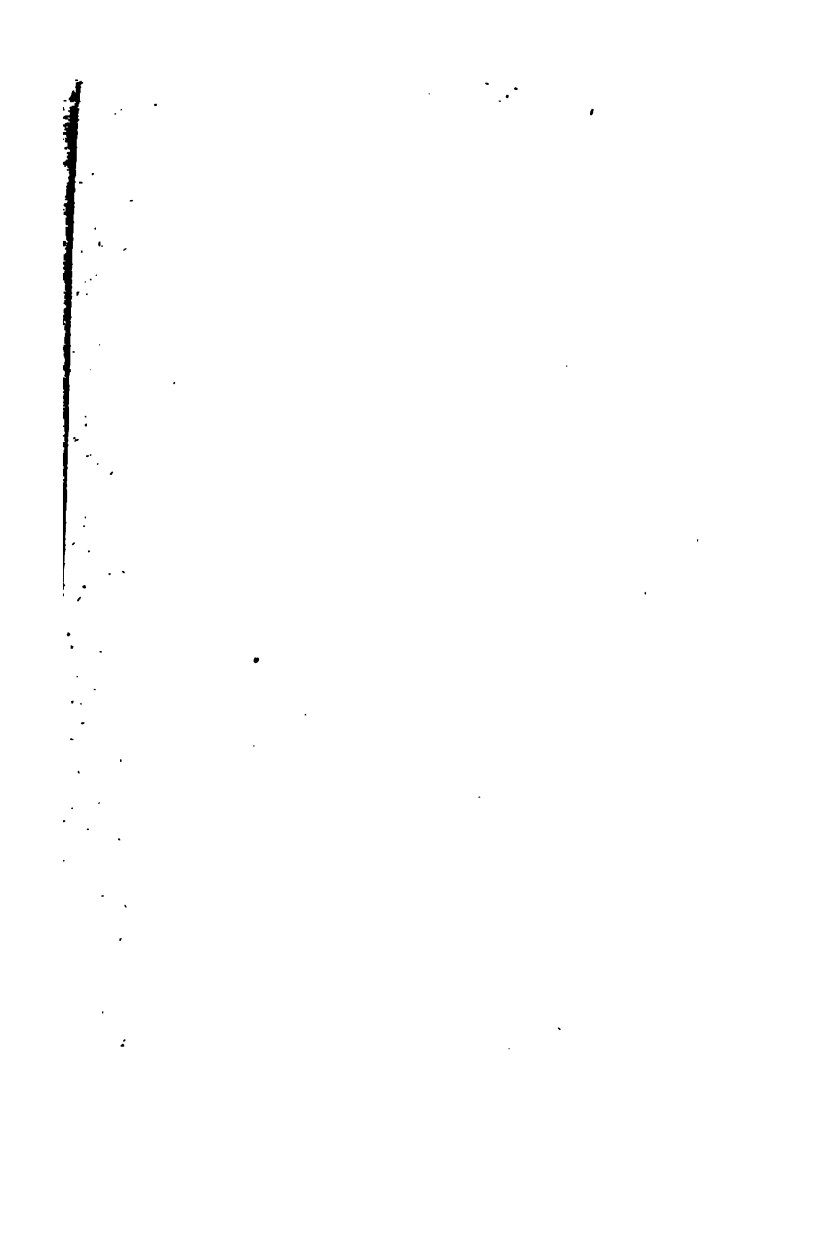
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LYCIDAS

BY JOHN MILTON



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JOHN MILTON.

JOHN MILTON, a poet of the first rank, was born in London in 1608, and died in 1674. His ancestors derived their name from the estate of Milton, near Thame, in Oxfordshire, of which they were the proprietors. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and Christ's College, Cambridge, and was ultimately appointed Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell and the Parliament. The last twenty years of his life were spent in total blindness; and yet during this period he composed his most important poem, 'Paradise Lost.' He wrote also many other works, both in poetry and prose, the chief of which are 'Paradise Regained,' 'Comus' (a mask, or play, performed at Ludlow Castle, in 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater), 'L'Allegro,' 'Il Penseroso,' 'Samson Agonistes' and 'Lycidas'; besides various Sonnets, Odes, and Hymns.

The *Lycidas* is a pastoral elegy composed by Milton in 1637, in memory of a deceased friend. It was republished in 1645 with the following heading attached for the first time: 'In this Monody, the Author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester, on the Irish Seas, 1637, and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.' The friend alluded to was Edward King, son of Sir John King, Kt., Secretary for Ireland. During a voyage to that country, the ship struck in calm weather

upon a rock, and all on board were drowned. King was a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and was only twenty-five years old at his death. He had been distinguished at College for his piety and learning, and seems to have been generally beloved. The year after his death there appeared a collection of Elegiac poems on his loss, and of these twenty-three were in Latin and Greek, and thirteen in English. The *Lycidas*, with the initials 'J. M. appended, was placed last in the collection.

CRITICISMS ON LYCIDAS.

DR. JOHNSON'S CRITICISM OF LYCIDAS.

‘Those who admire the beauties of this great poet sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace ; he over-looked the milder excellence of suavity and softness ; he was a *Lion* that had no skill in *dandling the kid*.

‘One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas* ; of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion ; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief.

‘In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth ; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that

of a pastoral ; easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting ; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted ; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey, that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries ; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines ?

We drove a-field, and both together heard,
What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

‘ We know that they never drove a-field, and that they had no flocks to batten ; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

‘ Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities ; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping ; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy, he who thus praises will confer no honour.

‘ This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a *superintendent of a Christian flock*. Such equivocations are *always unskillful* ; but here they are indecent, and at least

approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

'Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known the author.'—*Lives of the Poets*.

PROFESSOR MASSON'S ANALYSIS OF LYCIDAS.

'The song which opens with ll. 1-14 is not, it is to be remembered, the song of Milton speaking in his own person, but of Milton transformed in his imagination, for the time, into a poetic shepherd, bewailing in the season of Autumn, the untimely death of his fellow-shepherd Lycidas. Hence the whole elegy is an allegoric pastoral, a lyric of lamentation, rendered more shadowy and impersonal by being distanced into the form of a narrative and descriptive phantasy. The imaginary shepherd, after invoking the Muses to aid his sad office, tells of the friendship between himself and the dead in ll. 23-26, beginning with,

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
and ending—

And old Damocetas lov'd to hear our song.

'The hill here is, of course, Cambridge; the joint feeding of the flocks is companionship in study; the rural ditties on the oaten flute are academic iambics and elegiacs; and old Damocetas is either Chappell,¹ whom

¹ The Rev. William Chappell, Milton's first tutor at college, with whom he did not get on well. Through the influence of Archbishop Laud, Mr. Chappell was afterwards appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and ultimately became Bishop of Cork.

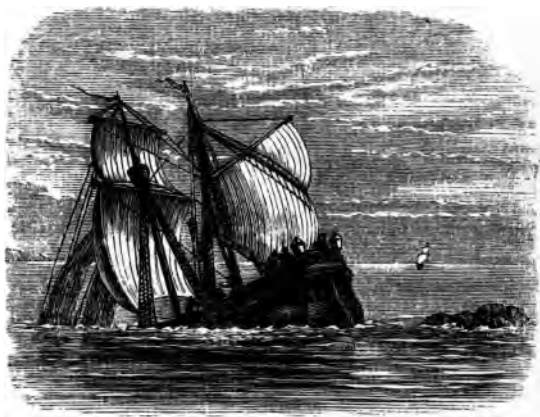
10 *Professor Masson's Analysis of Lycidas.*

Milton has long forgiven, or some more kindly fellow of Christ's. But the lamentation is continued. Where were the Nymphs, asks the minstrel, when the deep closed over the head of their beloved child? Not on the Welsh mountains surely, where the Druidic bards had sung; not on Mona's shaggy top, nor near the wizard stream of the Deva! Had they been there, Lycidas could not have perished in their so near vicinity! And yet what could they have done? Then in lines 64-76. "Alas! what boots it, &c." to "and slits the thin-spun life," the poet, in despondent tones, laments the uselessness of poetic study. The fancy then changes. After a strain of higher mood, correcting what has just been said, and telling how the praise of the good outlasts their life, there seems to pass before the shepherd a train of personages, each concerned in the loss which is lamented. First comes the herald of Neptune, pleading in his master's name, that *he* had not caused the death. Questioned by him, the winds that blow off the western promontories answer through Hippotades, as their messenger, that the crime had not been theirs. It was in a calm that the ship went down, ll. 98-102. Then comes Camus, reverend sire, clothed in airy mantle and with bonnet of sedge dimly embroidered, mourning the loss of his so hopeful son, ll. 103-108. "The pilot of the Galilean lake," the Apostle St. Peter, then appears, and in ll. 113-131, sternly rebukes the clergy of the Church of England for their neglect and inefficiency.

'As if a strain so stern and polemical had scared away the ordinary pastoral Muses, the mourning shepherd calls upon them to come back, that his song may subside once more into the Arcadian and Elegiac melody in which it had begun: ll. 132-151. While affectionate fancy supposes the loved body of Lycidas near for a sweet *Arcadian burial*, that loved body is unrecovered from the

deep, and the sounding seas may be hurling it hither and thither, perhaps beyond the stormy Hebrides, or perhaps beside that extreme point of the Cornish coast, where, according to old fable, the great vision of St. Michael sits on the mount that bears his name, looking towards far Namancos and the hold of Spanish Bayona. But what, wherever the body may be hurled? Lycidas himself is not dead; but as the daystar sinks in the ocean only to rise again, so has he sunk also; and, through the dear might of Him who walked the waves, he is now in a region of groves and streams other and more lovely than those of this earthly Arcady, where we are fain to bury him. There he hears the nuptial song; there the glorified saints entertain him; there the tears are wiped for ever from his eyes!

‘So ends the supposed song of the shepherd, and in the concluding lines, (186-193) it is Milton in person that speaks. And these lines form a voluntary explanation of the peculiar construction of the poem, and a parting intimation that the imaginary shepherd is Milton himself, and that the poem is a tribute to his dear friend rendered passingly in the midst of other occupations.’—*Life of John Milton*, vol. i.



'It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark.'

LYCIDAS.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

1 Once more. He had already written the 'Hymn on the Nativity,' 'L'Allegro,' 'Il Penseroso,' 'Arcades,' 'Comus,' and other shorter poems. **laurels, myrtles, and ivy.** These plants were symbolical of poetry. In former times, graduates at the English Universities were decked with a wreath of laurel. Cf. the term 'poet *laureate*' (151). These plants also, being ever-greens, are emblems of immortality, and therefore suitable to the poet's idea.

2 Brown, dark. Milton follows the sense of the Italian *bruno*, dark. Cf.—

'And shadows *brown*, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine or monumental oak.'—*Il Penseroso*, 134, 135.

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
 And, with forced fingers rude,
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5
 Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
 Compels me to disturb your season due ;
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,

sere, dry, withered ; also written 'sear.' Cf.—

'My way of life

Is fallen into the *sear*, the yellow leaf.'—*Macbeth*, v. 3.

3 **Harsh and crude.** (Lat. *crudus*, raw, unripe.) The poet alludes to his own efforts in verse, meaning that his powers as a poet were yet unripe. Comp. lines 6, 7. His great works, 'Paradise Lost,' 'Paradise Regained,' were not yet written. **forced**, i.e. compelled by the disastrous death of his friend to offer this tribute of verse to his memory. **rude**, rough, unpolished. The word now usually signifies something more than this.

5 **Shatter**—the softened form of 'Scatter,' Comp. 'Ship-ton' and 'Skipton,' 'brigg' and 'bridge,' &c. **before the mellowing year**, i.e. before the mellowing year does. These evergreen plants shed their leaves gradually during the year ; not all at once.

6 **Dear.** Originally this word meant 'costly ;' hence it also came to mean anything important, high, excessive, and even superlatively bad. Comp. Shakespeare's phrases, 'dearest spite' (Sonnet 37) ; 'dear peril' ('Timon of Athens,' v. 3) ; 'dearest foe' ('Hamlet,' i. 2).

7 **Compels.** We should now say 'compel,' to agree with the two nouns in the line above ; but Elizabethan writers and their immediate successors often made the verb agree with its nearest nominative. In early English, as late as the fourteenth century, the northern dialect made the third person plural of the verb to end in *s*—a form which often occurs in Shakespeare. Comp.—

'Whose own hard dealings *teaches* them suspect
 The deeds of others.'—*Merchant of Venice*, i. 3, 163.

8 **Lycidas.** A favourite name in ancient pastoral poetry. The poet alludes to his friend Mr. King. See Preface, p. 5.

Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew 10
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rime.
 He must not float upon his watery bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.
 Begin then sisters of the sacred well, 15
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;

ere his prime. King was only twenty-five years old. **prime.** Lat. *primus*, first; hence chief, which is the sense here; the chief part of a man's life, when all his powers are at their fullest development.

9 **Peer**, equal. Fr. *pair*, from Lat. *par*, equal.

11 **To sing**, i.e. how to sing. **rime**, also written 'rhyme.' The former is the true way of writing the word; it comes from the O. Eng. *rim*, 'number,' and is spelt *rhyme*, on the supposition that it comes from the Greek *ῥυθμός*, Lat. *rhythmus*, which is incorrect.

13 **Welter**, to roll in water or mire (O. Eng. *weltan*); now rarely used except in connection with blood (cf. wallow).

'Fallen from his high estate,
 And *welt'ring* in his blood.'

Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*.

14 **Meed**, reward, recognition of merit. See also line 84. **melodious tear**, i.e. poetic lamentation, an elegy. So Spenser calls his Elegies, 'The Tears of the Muses.'

15 **Sisters**, i.e. the Muses, who, according to ancient mythology, were the inspiring goddesses of song, and were regarded as the nymphs of inspiring wells, near which they were worshipped. **sacred well.** Either Aganippe or Hippocrene, on Mount Helicon; the name of a celebrated range of mountains in Bœotia, Greece. Compare—

'And hears the Muses in a ring
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing.'

Il Penseroso, 47, 48.

16 **The seat of Jove.** Probably an altar dedicated to Jupiter, the chief of the classic deities, on Mount Helicon. Mount

Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
 Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse :—
 So may some gentle Muse
 With lucky words favour my destined urn, 20
 And, as he passes, turn,
 And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud :—
 For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,

Olympus was considered the chief seat of Jupiter. As Jupiter was considered the lord of light, and white colour was sacred to him, possibly the snow-clad tops of Helicon, which were sacred to Apollo, may be poetically called his seat.

17 **String.** An allusion to the lyre or harp of the Muses.

18 **Hence.** Used elliptically and imperatively; a verb of motion is understood. 'Hence' has been occasionally used as a verb by old writers. Comp. this line with 'loudly sweep' in the line above.

19 **So may,** i.e. so may some gentle poet write an elegy on me when I am dead. **muse,** i.e. poet. This sense of the word is uncommon.

20 **My destined urn,** the tomb destined for me. The 'urn' was a vessel in which the ashes of the dead were placed. Shakespeare also uses 'urn' in the sense of tomb. See 'Coriolanus,' v. 5.

22 **Sable.** (Fr. *Sable*.) A small animal with deep black fur, found in Siberia. The name is given to the skin, which is much prized, and is also used to denote anything of the same colour. Here it is used to denote mourning, irrespectively of colour. **shroud,** most probably grave clothes. O. Eng. *scrud*, garment, clothing; hence, as a verb, to cover, conceal, hide. Cf.—

'And if your stray attendants be yet lodged,
 Or *shroud* within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake.'—Milton, *Comus*.

'Under this thick-grown brake we'll *shroud* ourselves.'
 Shakespeare, 3 *Hen. VI.* iii. 1.

23 **Nursed,** brought up; i.e. they were members of the same university. Students call the university in which they were edu-

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
 Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd 25
 Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
 We drove a-field, and both together heard
 What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
 Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
 Oft till the star, that rose at evening bright, 30

cated their *alma mater* (fostering mother); hence the appropriateness of the word 'nursed.'

24. **Fed, &c.**, i.e. were companions in the same studies.

25 **Lawns.** Lawn, originally *land* or *laund*, now means a stretch of smooth grass in front of a house; but formerly an open space of grass among trees. Cf.—

'For through this *laund* even the deer will come.'
 Shakespeare, 3 *Hen.* VI. iii. 1.

'Russet *lawns* and fallows gray,
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray.'
 Milton, *L'Allegro*.

'Betwixt them *lawns*, or level downs, and flocks,
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed.'
 Id. *Paradise Lost*.

Goldsmith uses the word in even a wider sense:—

'Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the *lawn*.'
Deserted Village.

27 **Drove a-field**, i.e. drove our flocks a-field. 'A' is the shortened form of *an*, on, in, and is found in many words as 'aboard,' 'alied,' &c. **heard what time, &c.**, i.e. heard the gray-fly at the time when she sounds her sultry horn. The phrase 'what time' is still in use interrogatively. The time meant in this line is noon. Cf. 'sultry horn.' The fly referred to by the poet is a subject of dispute.

29 **Battening**, feeding, fattening. *Battel*, still in use at Oxford University, signifying the provisions or commons taken by the students from the buttery, and also the charges thereon, is said to be another form of the same word.

30 **Till the star that rose.** The poet probably means

Towards heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
 Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
 Temper'd to the oaten flute ;

the 'evening star,' for the original manuscript had the reading 'even-starre;' but in thus speaking of the evening star rising he was imitating the ancient poets. The evening star, as Mr. Keightley, one of Milton's editors, says, 'never *rises*, but *appears*;' and it is never anywhere but 'on heaven's descent.'

31 **Westerling**, passing to the west. Comp.—

'The sonne gan *westrin* fast.'

Chaucer, *Troilus and Cresseyde*.

wheel, orbit, supposed path through the heavens.

32 **Ditties**. Properly the words of a song as distinguished from the tune, though it has been used to express both.

'No branch whereon a fine bird did not sitt,
 No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetly sing,
 No song, but did contain a lovely *ditt*.'

Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II. vi. 13.

'Though there was no great matter in the *ditty*, yet the note was very untuneable.'—Shakespeare, 'As You Like It,' v. 3.

The etymology of the word is doubtful, some deriving it from O. French *dicté* (Lat. *dicere*), a story, poem; others from O. Eng. *dihtan*, to dictate.

The poet alludes in this line to the Latin and Greek verse written at the University.

33 **Tempered**, i.e. made suitable in time and tune. Cf.—

'Birds of every kind
 To the water's fall their tunes *attemper* right.'

Spenser, *Shepherd's Calendar*, vi. 7.

The original meaning of the verb *to temper* is to mix things together, so that one part qualifies the other. The old physicians said there were four 'humours' in a man, viz. blood, choler, phlegm, and melancholy. When these were mixed in proper proportions he was said to have an *even temper*. If choler predominated he

Rough satyrs danced, and fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long, 35
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.

But, oh ! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return !
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose, 45

was said to be *choleric* ; if phlegm, *phlegmatic*, and so on. So we speak of *tempering* mortar, i.e. mixing it properly, and it is used in this sense in the text. **oaten flute**. This expression is an imitation of the Latin pastoral poets, in reference to the simplest kind of flute being made of an oat straw. It is used here to represent pastoral music.

34 **Satyrs**. Sylvan deities, according to ancient mythology, represented as half man and half goat, and characterised by riotous merriment. **fauns**. In ancient fable, gods of fields and shepherds, differing little from satyrs.

The poet probably alludes in this line to the less studious members of his own College in Cambridge.

36 **Damoetas**. See Professor Masson's Analysis, p 9, and note.

39 **Shepherd**, i.e. Lycidas, the poet's friend, Mr. E. King.

40 **Gadding**, straggling. O. Eng. *gad*, the point of a weapon : the same as *goad* ; hence the name 'gad-fly,' the fly that goads or stings cattle ; and hence the verb *to gad*, to go restlessly about, as cattle flying from the attack of the gad-fly.

41 **Mourn** agrees with its nominatives 'woods, caves, and echoes,' and governs 'thee.'

44 **Fanning**, i.e. moving like a fan.

45 **Canker**, i.e. the canker-worm. Comp. 'That which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.'—Joel i. 4
'Canker' is the hardened form of 'cancer,' O. Eng. *cancere*, Lat.

Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
 Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
 When first the white-thorn blows ;
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep 50

cancer, a crab. 'Canker' is used also in some parts of England for the name of a poisonous fungus, a caterpillar, and the dog-rose. Thus the last meaning occurs in Shakespeare's 'Much Ado,' i. 3 :—

'I had rather be a *canker* in a hedge, than a rose in his grace.'

And the first in—

'The calf, the wind-shock, and the knot,
 The *canker*, scab, scurf, sap, and rot.'—Evelyn.

Hence it means anything which corrupts or consumes. Cf.—

'It is the *canker* and ruin of many men's estates which, in process of time, breeds a public poverty.'—Bacon.

46 Taint-worm. 'There is found in the summer a kinde of spider called a *taint*, of a red colour, and so little of body that ten of the largest will hardly outweigh a grain ; this by country-people is accounted a deadly poison unto cows and horses.'—Browne, *Vulgar Errours*, b. iii. c. 27. The poet's addition of *-worm* may be a poetical license. **weanling**, newly weaned. **graze**, from grass. So brazier, from brass ; glazier, from glass. The sound of *s* in certain nouns becomes *z* when used as verbs or to denote doers of the actions expressed by them,—thus the nouns use, grease, excuse, refuse, become as verbs—use (uze), grease (greaze), excuse (excuze), refuse (refuze). Cf. also frost, freeze, frozen ; a similar modification occurs in cloth, clothe, clothier.

47 Wardrobe, properly a place to keep robes or clothing (O. Eng. *weardian*, to guard), hence applied to the wearing apparel itself.

48 When first, i.e. in Spring. **white-thorn**. The hawthorn, commonly called May, because it blooms in that month. The blackthorn blooms somewhat earlier, and its blossom precedes its leaves. **blows**, blossoms.

50 Nymphs, the Muses. See note 15. A 'nymph' in ancient mythology was a goddess of the mountains, woods, meadows, or

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas ?
 For neither were ye playing on the steep,
 Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
 Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream. 55
 Ay me ! I fondly dream,

waters. **remorseless** (Fr. *remord*, Lat. *remordeo*, to bite back or again). Remorse meant originally and still the gnawing of conscience for some act of cruelty. It then came to mean pity merely :—

'Wherefore, now touched with *remorse* of their pitiful case, he resolved to revoke the law of wrecks.'—Fuller, *Holy War*.

'His helmet, justice, judgment, and *remorse*.'

Middleton, *Wisdom of Solomon*, c. v. 17.

This latter meaning has now passed away from remorse, but is retained in 'remorseless' and its equivalent phrase 'without remorse.'

52 **Steep**. Some mountain on the north coast of North Wales. Mr. Keightley suggests Penmaenmawr, between Conway and Bangor. The site, however, is uncertain.

53 **Druids**, the priests and philosophers of the ancient Britons and Gauls. Lat. *druides*, from a Keltic word signifying an oak tree, under the shade of which their worship was usually held.

54 **Mona**, the ancient name of the Isle of Anglesey. The poet speaks of it as a mountain.

55 **Deva**, the ancient name of the river Dee. **wizard stream**. There was an old superstition respecting this river, that by some shifting of its stream it gave prophetic intimations to the English or Welsh of coming weal or woe. The poet Drayton, in his 'Polyolbion,' alludes to this curious fancy in the fourth song. 'Holy Dee' is introduced,—

'Who, changing of his fords, by *divination* had
 Foretold the neighbouring folk of fortune good or bad.'

'Or coaly Tine, or ancient *hallow'd Dee*.'

Milton, *Vacation Exercise*.

56 **Ay me**, i.e. Ah me ! an interjection expressing woe. **fondly**, foolishly. Comp.—

Had ye been there : for what could that have done ?
 What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament, 60
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore ?
 Alas ! what boots it with incessant care

‘ A god, leaped *fondly* into Ætna flames.’

Paradise Lost, iii. 470.

Old Eng. *fonne*, to be foolish. The modern sense of ‘fond’ is tender.

57 **HAD YE BEEN THERE.** To this thought as the subject of his dream the poet alludes in the line above.

58 **MUSE**, i.e. Calliope, the mother of Orpheus. **ORPHEUS**, a mythical personage, famous in Greek mythology for his enchanting music. Wild beasts, and even trees and rocks, were said to follow the sounds of his golden harp.

59 **ENCHANTING.** See note above. (Fr. *enchanter*; Lat. *cantare*, to sing; whence also cant and chaunt are derived.) Enchant originally meant to exert a magical power by means of verses recited or sung.

61 **ROUT**, a clamorous multitude, a company. The word comes from the Old French *route*, a troop, whence also *row*, a great noise, is probably derived. Orpheus was torn to pieces by the Thracian women under the excitement of the orgies of Bacchus. His head was thrown into the river Hebrus, down which it rolled to the sea, and was thence borne across to the island of Lesbos. The story of Orpheus’ death is told by the Latin poets Virgil and Ovid.

63 **HEBRUS**, the chief river in Thrace, now a part of European Turkey. **LESBIAN SHORE**, i.e. of Lesbos, one of the largest islands of the Ægean Sea, off Asia Minor.

64 **BOOTS**, profits. Old Eng. *bôt*, a compensation. Hence the phrase ‘to boot,’ over and above, into the bargain. Cf.—

‘ Man is God’s image ; but a poor man is
 Christ’s stamp to boot ; both images regard.’

G. Herbert.

To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade, 65
 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
 Were it not better done, as others use,
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
 Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise 70
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)

65 **Shepherd's trade**, i.e. the cultivation of poetry, for which the solitude of the shepherd's employment affords abundant opportunity.

66 **Thankless Muse**, i.e. poetry slighted, and for which he gets no thanks. *Thankless* here has its passive meaning, unthanked, but is usually active, unthankful.

67 **Use**, i.e. do. The poet refers to the light, amatory poems then in fashion.

68, 69 **Amaryllis** and **Neæra** are two female names frequently mentioned by some of the old Latin pastoral poets. These two lines probably allude to two poems by G. Buchanan (1506-1582).

70 Comp.—

'Due praise, that is the *spur* of doing well.'

Spenser, *Tears of the Muses*, 454.

clear, noble, distinguished. A classical meaning of Latin *clarus*. To read this line correctly *spirit* must be pronounced as a monosyllable, *sprite*, as it was often written by the poets, who sometimes also, but erroneously, spelt it *spright*:—

'The charge thereof unto a courteous *spright*
 Commanded was.'—Spenser.

'Of these am I who thy protection claim,
 A watchful *sprite*, and Ariel is my name.'

Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, Canto i.

Milton pronounces the word *sprite* in the following:—

'He sets
 Upon their tongues a various *spirit* to rase
 Quite out their native language.'

Paradise Lost, xii. 52.

71 **That last, &c.**, i.e. the desire of praise or fame is the last weakness wise men put off.

To scorn delights and live laborious days :
 But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears, 75
 And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
 Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears ;
 'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil
 Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies, 80
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,

72 **Scorn delights**, to give up pleasure and ease for the sake of gaining a reputation for something great and noble.

73 **Guerdon**, reward. O. Fr. *guerdon*.

74 **Blaze**, viz. of glory and fame.

75 **Blind Fury**. Fate is here called a Fury, and 'blind' because it makes no distinction between persons. In ancient mythology there were three goddesses called Fates, who superintended human life from birth to death. One was represented spinning the thread of life; another pointing with a staff to the globe; and the third with a cutting instrument. Hence the poet's allusion to 'shears' and 'thin-spun life.'

76 **Thin-spun**, very slender, and consequently easily broken, like very fine silk or other thread. An apt allusion to the frailty of human life. **But not the praise**, i.e. Fate does not cut off one's fame; that remains.

77 **Phœbus**, Apollo. In ancient mythology the god of song and music.

79 **Foil**, gold or silver leaf put behind a transparent precious stone to set off its lustre. Fr. *feuille*; Lat. *folium*, a leaf.

79, 80 Two meanings have been given to these lines:—(1) 'Nor is Fame set off to the world in the glistening foil, nor does it lie in broad rumour.' (2) 'Nor does Fame lie in the glistening foil set off to the world, nor does it lie (consist) in broad rumour.' The latter makes 'set off' a participle agreeing with 'foil,' and gives to the passage the sense that 'Fame does not consist in the specious show displayed to the world.' This seems the better meaning.

81 **By**, by means of.

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.'
 O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood, 85
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds !
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
 But now my oat proceeds,
 And listens to the herald of the sea
 That came in Neptune's plea. 90
 He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,

82 **All-judging** Jove, i.e. God.

83 **Lastly**, i.e. finally, after death, or at the Great Judgment.

85 **Arethuse**, one of Diana's attendant nymphs. She was changed into a fountain. Milton, in thus invoking her, imitates the old Latin pastoral poets.

86 **Mincius**, a river of Venetia, now called Mincio, upon whose banks the Latin poet Virgil was born. The latter fact explains the phrase 'honoured flood' (line above); and the epithets 'smooth-sliding,' 'crowned,' &c., are taken from Virgil.

87 **That strain**, &c., i.e. the verses (76-84) put into the mouth of Phoebus. **Mood**, musical style. Lat. *modus*. Cp.—

'What though no rule of courtly grace

To measured *mood* had trained her pace.'

Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, i. 353.

'Mood,' signifying a state of mind, comes from O. Eng. *mōd*, mind.

88 **Oat**. See note, l. 33.

89 **Herald of the sea**, i.e. Triton, son of Neptune, the sea god. He is generally represented as blowing a shell; his body above the waist being like that of a man, and below a dolphin.

90 **Neptune's plea**, i.e. the defence or enquiry made by Neptune, which Triton conveyed. **Plea**. Old French *plait*, *plaid*, from Lat. *placere*, to please, signifies what is advanced on either side in a suit at law.

91 **He**, i.e. Triton. **Felon**, (adj.) cruel, malicious. Felon is probably from the Low Latin *felo*, -onis, a thief. 'Felo de se.'

What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
 And question'd every gust of rugged wings,
 That blows from off each beaked promontory.
 They knew not of his story ; 95
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd :
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100

as a verdict of a coroner's jury, means one who has committed a felony (i.e. murder) upon himself. Fell, i.e. cruel, and the adv. felly, cruelly, are O. E. words.

92 **Doom'd**, judged, sentenced, condemned (O. Eng. *dōm*, judgment, authority) ; *dōm* is formed from the verb *do*, and as a suffix may be seen in *thraldom*, *wisdom*, *kingdom*, *dukedom*. **Swain**. Youth, properly a labourer, from O. Eng. *swān*, a herdsman, servant. Comp. *boatswain*, *coxswain*.

93 **Rugged**, rough. This word and *ragged* are often used for each other. Comp. 'As *ragged* as thy locks,' Milton's *L'Allegro*, 9. 'The tops of the *ragged* rocks,' Isaiah ii. 19. The words, however, are of different derivation: 'rugged' is from O. Eng. *rūg*, *rūh*, rough, shaggy ; and 'ragged' from O. Eng. *hracian*, to tear. **Of rugged wings** shows the character of gust as rough, strong ; equivalent to 'rough-winged gusts.'

94 **Beaked**, i.e. jutting out like a beak.

95 **Story**, the account of his shipwreck.

96 **Hippotades**, i.e. Æolus, the god of the winds : he was famous in ancient fable as a just and wise ruler ; hence the epithet 'sage.'

97 **Dungeon**. Æolus was said to keep the winds confined in a mountain cave. See Virgil's *Æneid*, bk. i. **Strayed**. The transitive use of this verb is now obsolete.

99 **Sleek**, smooth, glossy. The sleek appearance of the seal, walrus &c., when they emerge from the sea, is very noticeable. Hence the poet applies the epithet to Panope. **Panope**. One of the fifty sea-nymphs, daughters of Nereus, who had his home at the bottom of the sea.

Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,

101 **Built in the eclipse.** Eclipses were supposed in olden times to forebode misfortune, and things undertaken then were naturally thought unlucky. Comp.—

'Slip of yew

Shivered in the moon's *eclipse*.'—*Macb.* iv. 1.

rigg'd with curses, i.e. curses were uttered when she was being rigg'd.

102 **That.** The antecedent is bark. **sacred head**, i.e. head now sacred to memory.

103 **Camus**, i.e. the god of the river Cam, on which Cambridge stands. **sire**, father—a meaning commonly given by the classic poets to designate the presiding deity of a river. Comp.—

'Oh Tiber! *father* Tiber!

To whom the Romans pray.'

Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

Footing. Foot, as a verb, is not often used now except with *it*, where it is apparently active :—

'The man set the boy on the ass and *footed it* himself,' i.e. went on foot.—Sir R. L'Estrange.

In the text it is neuter, and means moving with a slow pace. The river Cam (or Granta) takes its rise in a district of little elevation, and having a comparatively long course, moves with a sluggish stream. **slow**, adj. for adv. Neuter verbs are frequently followed by adjectives, where we might expect adverbs. As, *the stars shine bright*, *the time flies fast*.

'How *sweet* the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!'

Shakespeare.

This may be due to the fact that in O. Eng. the adverb was often framed from the adjective by adding *e* (thus, adj. soft, adv. soft^e), which, in course of time, like many other endings, was dropped; or to the fact that in many cases the adjective is in-

His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
 'Ah! who hath reft,' quoth he, 'my dearest pledge?'
 Last came, and last did go,
 The pilot of the Galilean lake;

tended to express rather the quality of the agent as seen in the act, or after the act, than the quality of the act itself.

104 **His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge.** Mantle and bonnet are nominatives *absolute*, i.e. they have no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence. In the oldest English the dative was the Absolute case, as the Ablative is in Latin and the Genitive in Greek. The Nominative Absolute in English began to replace the Dative about the middle of the fourteenth century. Milton has elsewhere some imitations of the Latin idiom:—'*me overthrown*,' '*us dispossessed*,' '*him destroyed*.' Cf. also—

'Thei han stolen him *us slepinge*,' i.e. while we slept.

Wicliffe's Bible, Matt. xxviii. 21.

105 **Inwrought, &c.** Mr. Keightley considers this phrase to be 'a mere play of fancy.' Mr. Jerram quotes Dunster's remark as worth noticing:—'On sedgy leaves, when dried, there are certain dim, indistinct, and dusky streaks on the edge.'

106 **Sanguine flower, &c.** The flower is the hyacinth, which, according to classic fable, sprang from the blood of Ajax, and bore upon its petals the letters *ai*. These were at once the initials of his name and expressive of a sigh.

107 **Reft**, the past tense and participle of 'to reave.' O. Eng. *reafan*, to take away. This word frequently occurs in the Elizabethan authors, and it is now in use in the form 'bereave.' **quoth**, said. O. Eng. *cwethan*, pret. *cwæth*. The old form was *quath*. This verb still survives in our 'quote.' **pledge**, child, offspring; frequently used by Spenser and Milton in this sense.

109 **Pilot**, i.e. St. Peter. Cf. St. Luke v. 1-11. **Galilean lake**, i.e. Lake Tiberias or Sea of Galilee.

Two massy keys he bore of metals twain, 110
 The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.
 He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake :
 'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold ! 115
 Of other care they little reckoning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest,
 Blind mouths ! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least 120

110 **Two massy keys, &c.** See St. Matthew's Gosp. c. xvi., where the keys of heaven were given to St. Peter. The number two was an invention of later days. The metals gold and iron are the poet's own fancy.

111 **Opes**, poetically for *opens*, **amain**, with might, firmly. Old Eng. *mægen*, strength, and prefix *a*, on which see note l. 27. Comp. the phrases 'might and *main*,' 'by *main* force.'

112 **Mitred**. As St. Peter was a bishop, Milton makes him here wear the diadem distinctive of that order in later times. **stern**, adj. for adv. Cf. l. 104.

113 Mr. King appears to have intended to take holy orders. From this line to 131 Milton satirises the clergy of his day.

114 **Enow**, an old form of *enough*, now obsolete. Old Eng. *genoh*.

115 See St. John's Gospel, ch. x.

118 **Worthy bidden guest**. See St. Matt. xxii. 8. Milton means a faithful pastor or minister of the gospel.

119 **Blind mouths**, i.e. ministers who cannot preach or teach, and who are devoted to gluttony. They are here stigmatised by the instrument of their self-indulgence.

120 **Sheep-hook**, a hook fastened to a pole by which shepherds lay hold on the legs of their sheep when they want to catch them. The pastoral staff of a bishop is formed like a sheep-hook, because he is a pastor or shepherd of Christ's flock. Cf. Our Lord's command to Peter, 'Feed my lambs,' 'Feed my sheep.'—*St. John* xxi. 15, 16.

That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs !
 What reck's it them ? What need they ? They are sped ;
 And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw ;
 The hungry sheep look up and are not fed, 125
 But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ;
 Beside what the grim wolf, with privy paw,
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

121 **Herdsman**, equivalent to 'shepherd.' Used in a spiritual sense.

122 **Recks it them**, i.e. what do they care? 'Reck,' Old Eng. *recan*, to care for, was often used impersonally. Comp.—

'Of light, or loneliness, *it recks* me not.'

Milton's *Comus*, 404.

sped, provided for. Old Eng. *spedan*, to prosper ; *sped*, success. This word is usually used now to express quickness of motion ; but in such phrases as 'good speed,' 'with all speed,' the old meaning was success, good fortune.

123 **List**, to choose, desire, be disposed. **flashy**, showy, but spiritless. 'Songs' is Objective after 'grate.'

124 **Scrannel**, shrill, shrieking, grating, harsh. This word belongs to the Lancashire dialect, and is connected with *cranny*, a small chink or fissure, and is here applied by Milton to pipes as if not sound or air-tight.

126 **Rank**, strong, excessive. In lines 123-125, the poet speaks of the preaching of the clergy generally ; and 'swollen with wind,' in that line, alludes to the 'windy words,' more noisy than sensible, of pulpit teaching.

128 **Wolf**. Some suppose this refers to Archbishop Laud ; others, with more reason, refer it to the Roman Catholic Church, and 'privy paw' most probably means the secret working of the Jesuits in England at that time.

129 **Daily devours**. About this time there were numerous perversions to the Roman Catholic Church. **nothing said** alludes to the remiss conduct of the Court and the clergy generally with regard to the facts just stated.

But that two-handed engine at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.'

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,

130 **That** is here demonstrative. **two-handed engine.** An allusion most probably to Divine punishment—'the axe laid to the root of the tree.' See St. Matt. iii. 10. **engine**, a machine of any kind. Fr. *engin*, from Lat. *ingenium*, as used of an axe. The epithet 'two-handed,' i.e. requiring the use of two hands, is most apt. **At the door**, an allusion to sure and speedy punishment. See St. Matt. xxiv. 33.

132 **Return, Alpheus.** The poet again returns to his pastoral style after the digression of lines 113-131, and as before, l. 85, he invoked Arethusa, so now he calls upon Alpheus, her fabled lover. **dread voice**, i.e. the voice of St. Peter that 'stern bespake.' See l. 112.

133 **Shrank**, caused to shrink. This verb is rarely used transitively. **streams**, i.e. pastoral song, alluding to the digression, lines 113-131. **Sicilian Muse**, i.e. the Muse of the poet Theocritus, who lived at Syracuse in Sicily in the third century before the Christian era, and is considered to have been the father of pastoral or bucolic poetry.

134 **Hither**, i.e. on the coffin of Lycidas, as if his body had been recovered from the deep.

136 **Use**, haunt, frequent. Cf.—

'Conduct me well

In these strange ways, where never foot did use.'

Spenser.

This sense of the word is now obsolete.

137 **Whispers . . . of shades**, i.e. the gentle rustling of the leaves of shady trees. **wanton**, unrestrained, unchecked. The word is compounded of the Old Eng. *wan* (allied to *want* and *wane*), denoting deficiency, and *towen*, trained, the past part. of *teow*, to lead. *Wan*=prefix *un*. Early in the thirteenth

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks ;
 Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,

century we find *untowen* for untrained ;—now wanton. Many compounds of *wan* have become obsolete, e.g. *wan-hope* = waned-hope, despair ; *wan-luck* = waned-luck, misfortune ; *wan-thrift* = waned-thrift, extravagance ; *wan-wit* = waned-wit, folly ; *wan-grace* = waned-grace, wickedness ; *wan-trust* = waned-trust, distrust.

138 **Swart-star**, the star Sirius, or the Dog-star, whose rising and setting with the sun in the hot summer months originated the name 'dog-days.' **swart**, black, dusky ; its common form is 'swarthy.' This adjective, as applied to the Dog-star, alludes to the injurious effect of excessive heat upon vegetation. **sparely**, seldom, rarely.

139 **Quaint**, adj. for adv. (N. Fr. *coint* ; Lat. *comptus*, adorned), formerly meant nothing more than elegant, graceful, skilful, subtle.

'And curl the grove
 With ringlets *quaint*'—i.e. graceful.

Milton, *Arcades*.

'But you, my lord, were glad to be employed,
 To show how *quaint* an orator you are,' i.e. skilful.
 Shakespeare, *2 Hen. II.* iii. 2.

'A ladder *quaintly* made of cords,' i.e. skilfully.
 Id. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iii. 1.

To these meanings, which have become almost obsolete, has been added a notion of *strangeness* and *sadness*, which has almost superseded the others.

In this sense indeed Milton uses the word in *Comus*, 156 :—

'Lest the place.
 And my *quaint* habits breed astonishment.'

enamel is a hard white or transparent substance composed mainly of the oxides of lead and tin with soda and ground flint or quartz melted together. Pictures, &c., are painted on it, and fixed by burning. This process is called enamelling, and the paintings *thus prepared* are much prized for their peculiar brightness and *vividness*. Hence the allusion in the text. The *enamel* of the

That on the green turf suck the honey'd showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,

teeth is so called from its resemblance to the substance above mentioned. **eyes**, i.e. the tints of small flowers. Comp. daisy (i.e. day's eye). Also—

'The ground indeed is tawny.'

'With an *eye* of green in't.'—*Tempest*, ii. 1.

'Red with an *eye* of blue makes a purple.'—Boyle.

140 **Honied**, sweet, agreeable.

141 **Purple** is here a verb in the indicative mood for em-purple. Purple is properly red tintured with blue, but the Lat. *purpureus* was used in poetry to express *beautiful, brilliant*, and purple is so used here. Cf.—

'Reclining soft in blissful bowers,

Purpled sweet with springing flowers.'—Fenton.

'Now in loose garlands, thick thrown off, the bright

Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,

Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.'

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 362.

vernal flowers, spring flowers.

142 **Rathe**, or *rath*, quick, early. (Old Eng. *hradth*.) Comparative *rather*, which is obsolete. *Rath* was also an adverb, the comparative of which is still in use.

'The *rather* lambs bene starved with cold.'—Spenser.

i.e. those born too early in the season. The *a* in the adjective *rath*, *rathe*, and its comparative *rather*, is to be sounded like *a* in fate; the *a* in the adverb *rather* is sounded as in father. **forsaken**. Comp.—

'Pale primroses

That die *unmarried*.'—*Winter's Tale*, iv. 5.

Milton wrote 'unmarried' in this line originally. 'Forsaken' refers to the retirement in which the flower grows.

143 **Crow-toe**, or crow-foot, so called from the shape of its root. It is a species of *ranunculus*, and is sometimes called King-

The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
 The glowing violet, 145
 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,

cup. **Jessamine**, more correctly *jasmine* (Fr. *jasmin* ; Gr. *ιάσμη*, a fragrant perfume), a well-known sweet-scented flower, white and pale yellow in colour.

144 White pink. The name of this flower is probably not derived from its colour, but the name of the colour from the flower, the wild varieties of which have *pink* blossoms. The botanical name is *Dianthus*, of which picotees, cloves, and carnations are species. *Pink* is derived from Fr. *pince*, a tip or point, because its leaves are pointed. *Pink* (verb), to work in eyelet-holes, to pierce in small holes, to wink ; (noun) a ship with pointed stern ; anything supremely excellent, are all derived from the same root. The term *white pink* is therefore not a contradictory one, as some might suppose. Even if the name of the flower were derived from its colour, it would be allowable, for the colour is an accident. White blackbirds have not unfrequently been met with, differing from others only in their colour. See White's *Selborne*, ed. by Captain T. Brown, note to Letter XV. **pansy** (Fr. *pensée*, a thought), the heartsease, a species of *Viola*, and akin to the common violet, by which name the pansy is called in Yorkshire and other parts of England.

'There is *pansies*, that's for thoughts.'

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, iv. 5.

freaked, streaked, spotted. Derivation is uncertain. Chaucer has *frekens* for spots ; and in the north of England *flecked* is spotted. 'Freckled,' a kindred word, is the one now commonly in use. **Jet**, here used for any very dark colour, is a fossil of vegetable origin, of a firm and even structure and smooth surface, found in masses lodged in clay. It resembles cannel coal, but is blacker and more brilliant. Its Latin name is *Gagates*, derived from the river Gagas, in Syria, near the mouth of which it was found. It has been called *black amber*, because of its electric properties. *Jet*, to spout out, is a different word entirely, being derived from the French.

146 Musk-rose, so called from the musky character of its scent. **well-attired**, i.e. having a handsome head-dress or

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears :
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
 To strew the laureate herse where Lycid lies.

flower. For this sense of attired see 2 Kings ix. 30, 'Jezebel *tired* her head,' and Levit. xvi. 4, 'with the linen mitre shall he be *attired*.' The word is also used in the sense of 'dress' generally. Whether it is derived from Old French *attour*, a woman's hood, or Old Eng. *tyrnan*, to turn, is uncertain.

147 **Cowslip**, divided cow-slip, not cows-lip, as shown by the Old Eng. *oxan-slipa* (oxlip), where the *an* is the sign of the Genitive case. The meaning of *slip* is uncertain. **wan**, pale. (Old Eng. *wanian*, decrease, decline, whence *wane*, to fade.) Cf. wanton (137). **pensive** (Fr. *pensif*; *penser*, to think; from Lat. *pendo*, *pensum*, to weigh, consider), hanging the head as if in deep thought, drooping. Very applicable to the bells of the cowslip.

148 **Flower**, Obj. by bring, l. 142. **sad embroidery**, i.e. every flower that wears any appearance of sadness, in the pale, faded colour of its blossoms, their drooping character, or their loneliness.

149 **Amaranthus** (Gr. *ἀ*, not, *μαραίνω*, to fade), a flower that never fades or perishes. 'Everlasting Flower' used in making funereal wreaths.

150 **Daffadillies**, usually written daffodillies or daffodils; also daffadownillies. (Fr. *fleur d'asphodèle*.)

151 **Laureate**, decked with laurel;—an allusion to the ancient custom of crowning famous poets with the laurel wreath. In England the 'poet laureate' is a person attached to the Sovereign's household, whose business is to compose an ode on every suitable public occasion. Formerly this was done annually for the sovereign's birthday. The title is said to have been first conferred officially on Ben Jonson in 1619. See also note on l. 1. **herse** (Old Fr. *herce*; Low Lat. *hercia*: Lat. *herpex*, *herpicis*, a harrow.) The Low Lat. *hercia* signifies a kind of candlestick in the form of a harrow, having branches filled with lights, and placed at the head of graves or cenotaphs; whence *herse* came to be used for the grave, coffin, or any framework or canopy erected over the tomb. 'Hearse,' a carriage for the conveyance of the dead, is the same

For so, to interpose a little ease,
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise :
 Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd, 155
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
 Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world ;
 Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160
 Where the great vision of the guarded Mount

word. The allusion in this line is to the custom of attaching laudatory verses to the funeral canopy.

153 **Frail**. Note the use of this word as an excuse for 'dally with false,' &c. **dally**, play, trifle. The meaning of the line is—'Let us imagine that the body of Lycidas is lying here before us.' That it is not so in reality the following lines proceed to state. This word must be accented on the second syllable here, not, as usual, on the first.

'Tis now no time to *dally*,

The enemy begin to rally.—Butler, *Hudibras*, i. 3.

154 **Shores**, properly the space between ordinary high-water mark and low-water mark, but the word here means the water covering the shores as distinct from the 'sounding seas.'

156 **Stormy Hebrides**. Hebrides, or Western Islands, north-west of Scotland. Stormy because exposed to the full force of the Atlantic.

157 **Whelming**. The commoner form is 'overwhelming.'

158 **Monstrous**, abounding in monsters ; affix *-ous*=full of. Cf. *humorous*, *cumbrous*, *mutinous*, &c.

159 **Moist vows**, i.e. pledges of affection accompanied with tears.

160 **By the fable of Bellerus**, i.e. by the fabled abode of Bellerus. Bellerus was a fabled Cornish giant. His name is said to be coined from Bellerium, now the Land's End.

161 **Vision of the guarded mount**. The mount referred to is *St. Michael*, a steep rock off the coast of Cornwall, near *Penzance*. The ruins of a fortress are to be seen there. On the *summit of the mount* is a seat called *St. Michael's Chair*, where,

Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold ;
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth :
And O, ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more, 165
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,

report says, the Archangel Michael has been seen ; hence the allusion 'great vision.'

162 **Namancos.** This and Bayona were on the coast of Galicia, in Spain. **Bayona's hold,** the castle of Bayona.

163 **Look homeward,** i.e. look near the coast of England, where the body of Lycidas is carried by the waves. **angel,** i.e. 'the great vision.' See l. 161. **ruth,** pity, sorrow ; the substantive of the verb *to rue*.

164 **Dolphins.** The ancients believed these fish to be friendly disposed to man ; and their curved backs suggested the idea of carrying a burden. Shakespeare thus refers to them in several places. **waft.** This word is akin to 'wave.' Old Eng. *wegan*, to move. Its modern meaning is to convey by a breath of wind, but it was formerly used in a more general sense. Thus Shakespeare uses it for 'to beckon with the hand :'

'But soft, who *wafts* us yonder ?'

Comedy of Errors, ii. 1.

Comp. also, for motion in general, Sir W. Scott :—

'Be ours, she cried, the skiff to guide,
And *waft* him from the mountain side.'

Lady of the Lake, ii. 458, 459.

hapless, luckless. The derivation of *hap* is uncertain ; probably the Old Eng. *haban*, to have. The Welsh have *hap*, *hab*, meaning luck, fortune.

165 **Weep, &c.** Comp.—

'Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.'

Much Ado About Nothing.

166 **Your sorrow,** i.e. the object of your sorrow.

168 **Day-star.** Possibly the sun, which Milton calls in

And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore 170
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
 Through the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves,
 Where, other groves and other streams along,
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175

'Paradise Lost' the 'diurnal star;' or the poet may be following classic usage in speaking of the evening star as returning next day as a morning star.

169 **Repairs**, restores, renews. (Fr. *réparer*, from Lat. *reparare*, to renew.) Comp.—

'Repair me with thy presence, Silvia.'

Two Gentlemen of Verona, v. 4.

170 **Tricks**, adorns.

'Not trick'd and frounc'd as she was wont
 With the Attick boy to hunt.'

Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 123.

new-spangled. *Spang*, more commonly *spangle*, is a thin piece of gold, silver, or other shining material.

'A vesture . . . sprinkled here and there
 With glittering *spangs* that did like stars appear.'

Spenser, *Fuërie Queene*.

ore, i.e. bright metallic gold. For 'ore' in the sense of gold, comp. Shakespeare—

'Like some ore

Among a mineral of metals base.'—*Hamlet*, iv. 1.

172 **Lycidas** is Nom. to sunk, which is for sank, the past indic., not the pass. part.

173 **Through, &c.** See St. Matthew xiv. 22–23. **dear**. See l. 6.

174 The construction is, 'Where he laves his oozy locks with nectar pure along other groves and other streams.'

175 **Nectar**. In Mythology, the drink of the gods. **oozy**, *muddy*. The poet imagines Lycidas to be conveyed bodily to heaven.

And hears the unexpressive nuptial song
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
 There entertain him all the saints above,
 In solemn troops and sweet societies,
 That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more ;
 Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
 To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185
 Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
 While the still morn went out with sandals gray ;

176 **Unexpressive**, i.e. inexpressible—a meaning now obsolete. See Milton's 'Ode on the Nativity,' 116 :—

'With *unexpressive* notes to Heaven's new-born Heir.'

So in Shakespeare :—

'Carve on every tree
 The fair, the chaste, the *unexpressive* she.'

As You Like It, iii. 2.

nuptial song. See Revelation xix. 6, 7.

178 **Entertain**, indic. mood, ag. w. 'all the saints above.'

179, 180 The order is, 'That sing in solemn troops,' &c. See 'Paradise Lost,' bk. v. 618-627. Comp. Addison's 'Hymn :—

'For ever singing as they shine,
 The Hand that made us is divine.'

181 See Isaiah xxv. 8, and Revelation vii. 14.

183 **Genius**. According to the ancient Romans, this was a good or evil spirit which presided over men's destinies, and had charge of certain places and things.

184 **In thy large recompense**, i.e. as thy great reward or compensation (for all thy woes).

186 Milton here speaks in his own character. **uncouth**, rude. See l. 3.

187 **Sandals gray**, alluding to the gray appearance of the sky just before sunrise.

He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay :
 And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills, 190
 And now was dropt into the western bay.
 At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue :
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

188 **Quills**, i.e. notes. The poet probably referred to the pipes of Pan, which, however, have no 'stops,' and cannot therefore be 'touched.' 'Stops' are holes in the flute, &c. The 'various quills' refer to the different themes of the poem.

189 **Eager**, intent, keen. **Doric**, i.e. pastoral. Theocritus, the father of pastoral poetry, wrote in the Doric dialect of Greek.

190 **Stretch't out all the hills**, i.e. the sun had stretched the shadow of the hills, indicating that it had become evening.

192 **He**, i.e. the 'swain' of line 186, viz. the poet himself. Lines 187-192 imply that the poet was engaged from 'early morn to dewy eve' in composing his lay. **twitch'd**, &c., i.e. drew his mantle tightly round him, as if suddenly sensible of the chilliness of the evening.

193 **To-morrow, &c.** Having finished this poem, other occupations await him. See l. 1.

